

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Town of Ashburnham

*Town of Ashburnham Village Center Zoning District Study Committee
and Town Planner present results of the July 2008
“Village Center Customer Survey”*

Ashburnham, Mass., December 17, 2008 -- The Town of Ashburnham Village Center Zoning District Committee and the Town Planner prepared an Ashburnham resident Village Center Customer Survey that was mailed out to 2,800 Ashburnham residents in July 2008 via the Municipal Light Department monthly Light Bills. Between July 7, 2008 and September 4, 2008 234 completed surveys were returned to the Town for an 8.36% response rate. Preliminary results of the Customer Survey were shared with the Ashburnham Village Center Zoning District Study Committee at their November 19, 2008 meeting.

A Power Point file that provides for a detailed summary of the Village Center customer Survey results will be available at the Town of Ashburnham Web Site at http://www.ashburnham-ma.gov/Pages/AshburnhamMA_BComm/VillageZoning

To follow is a short summary of the results of the “Village Center Customer Survey.”

- Asked for what purposes they visit the Ashburnham Village Center, with multiple responses allowed, 89% said shopping; 42% said services, 40% said events, and 37% said dining.
- Forty (40) percent reported using services in the Village Center three to five times a week, while 31% indicated about once a week. Only 7% reported visiting every day. Most people drive to the Village Center.
- On average, respondents dine out approximately 2.1 times per month for breakfast, 4.1 times for lunch, and 3.6 times per month for dinner. However, only 8% of these dining experiences took place at establishments within the Village Center.
- The kinds of businesses most frequently cited as being needed in the Village Center were a sit-down restaurant, a bookstore, and a pub or tavern. In contrast, respondents feel that the existing hardware store, bank, barber/hairdresser and dry cleaner in the Village Center do a good job at meeting their needs.

- Asked to rate various characteristics of the Village Center, respondents were most satisfied with the friendliness of service, safety, and cleanliness. In deciding where to shop, however, people view the quality of goods and services and the selection of merchandise as most important, and 30% rated the ability to find what you want in the Village Center as poor.

- An open-ended question on the survey asked residents, "What businesses do you patronize in other areas that you would like to see in the Village Center?" Approximately two-thirds of the survey respondents answered the question, in some cases listing several types of businesses; 73 wrote in "none." The type of business named most frequently was a restaurant, with 65 instances of this term; related answers included "pub" or "pub dining" (15 responses), "dining" (9), "coffee shop" (6), "family restaurant" or "family dining" (6), "fast food" (5), "bakery" (5), and "Dunkin' Donuts" (4). Residents are clearly most interested in some sort of casual sit-down restaurant. Other leading responses were a bookstore (24), gas station (13), a bank or credit union (13), another grocery store or supermarket (11), and a fitness club or gym (5).

For more information about the Village Center Customer Survey or the work of the Village Center Zoning District Study Committee, please visit the Committee's web site at http://www.ashburnham-ma.gov/Pages/AshburnhamMA_BComm/VillageZoning. Please visit the Town of Ashburnham's Website at www.ashburnham-ma.gov to find out when upcoming meetings of the Village Center Zoning District Committee will be held.

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